

Upper Sebasticook River Wetlands

Cambridge, Ripley, Harmony

Description

These wetlands along the Sebasticook River provide habitat for many rare and unusual animal species. Least terns and black terns have been known to nest in the Mainstream Pond area, which is also a focal foraging area for resident and transient eagles. The rarest species here is the globally rare Tomah Mayfly, which has been documented as “common” in the Mainstream Pond area. This is the only area in the entire Sebasticook drainage where Tomah Mayfly has been found, despite fairly extensive searches; it is also the most southerly population of the mayfly in the state. Given its global rarity, the presence of this mayfly here makes this area a high priority for conservation. Wood turtle, an uncommon species in Maine, is known from Ferguson Stream and may be elsewhere nearby. The area has not been inventoried for unusual plants or natural communities. However, given that this stretch of the river retains its natural flow regime, the sedge meadow (supporting the Tomah Mayfly) and other wetland communities may be of interest.



Rare Species and Natural Communities Summary Table

Common Name	Latin Name	EO Rank	Global Rank	State Rank
Tomah Mayfly	<i>Siphonisca aerodromia</i>	--	G2	S2
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	--	G4	S2
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>	--	G4	S2

Other Resources Mapped by MDIFW

Extensive Wading Bird – Waterfowl habitat and Deer Wintering Areas are mapped within the focus area.

Protection Status

A portion of the area, including a fairly long stretch of stream frontage, is held by the Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife as the Cambridge Wildlife Management Area. The remainder is privately owned.

Conservation Considerations

The most important conservation strategy is maintaining or improving the water quality within the watershed. Conservation easements, fee ownership, and tree growth and open space treatments would be additional conservation vehicles.

An adequate buffer should be retained between developed lots or timber harvest areas and all shores and wetlands. The state minimum shoreland zoning standards restrict harvest and clearing within 250' of the shore or wetland border. Because different species can have different buffering requirements, better protection will be afforded to the collective wetland plants and animals with larger buffers. Any timber harvesting within and adjacent to the wetland should be implemented with strict adherence to state or local Shoreland Zoning guidelines and Maine Forest Service Best Management Practices.